

Two Letters, concerning the Holy Trinity;

Concerning the two Persons of the Godhead in the Church Communion.

# LETTERS,

## HOLY TRINITY;

*Reconciling together in some measure the Semi-Arian and the Trinitarian Systems, concerning Christ's Divinity; and Inquiring, Whether the Three Persons, speaking of God, shou'd be Imposed in Acts of Church-Communion?*

*To be offered to the Consideration of the Learned, in order to their giving their Opinion and Reasons, concerning the things herein mentioned.*

**The First LETTER; being a Preparatory of the Matter, more fully treated of in the Second.**

**I** Consume my Spirits daily, in studying more and more the Doctrine of the Trinity, and cannot cease that Study, for fear I should be wanting to my Duty on the one Hand or the other. But after all, I can find no Rest, but in the seeming Generality of the Expressions of Scripture. I believe there may be more implied in those Expressions, or they may import otherwise, then all Men are aware of. But then, the Scripture being so Mysterious and Obscure about this Point, doth it not seem to be to the intent, to try the best Industry and Search of every one in particular, and our Moderation in so intricate and difficult a Matter, and so to lead and oblige us

us to bear with one another in different Sentiments herein, uniting in the Scripture-Generality, no Man being to judge for another. The Ancients, so far as I can perceive, seem very much Divided and Uncertain in their Judgment about this Obscure Subject. By the Expressions of the Primitive Doctors that began to Plaguing among Christians, it seems that they inclined most to *Semi-Arianism*, as I also in some measure do, mollifying the *Arian* System, as I think is the true Import of it, rationally understood.

I seek only Counsel and Instruction, and desire to be truly Humble and Moderate as I ought to be, and pray God I may actually discharge my whole Duty. I believe, that the Godhead is as intimately United with Christ as possible, and that not only the Divine Power continually affists him, so that he disposes of it as a Man disposes of his Arms or Hands, (which is merely by Desiring or Willing,) but also that the Divine Wisdom constantly illuminates and conduct his Soul, as our Soul hath our Body, insomuch that he is thereby enabled to represent God at the Head of the Universe. And I do not see what more than this can be understood by the Union of the Divine with Christ's Human Nature. Wherefore, by this Consideration, the *Semi-Arian* and *Trinitarian* Systems seem herein to be nearly reconciled together.

By the Holy Ghost, or Holy Spirit, I understand the Divine and Sanctifying Inspiration, and the Miraculous (or Wonder-working) Divine Power, communicated in some measure to some Men, according to the good Pleasure of God, together with the concurring Ministry of some Angel, as seems to be infer'd from several Places of Scripture, particularly, *Luke*, 1, 35. *1 Tim.* 5, 21. *Hebr.* 1, 7, compared with *Acts* 2, 3, 4. *Hebr.* 1, 14, compared with *John*, 16, 12. *Mt.* 8, 26, 29, 30.

I believe then, that there is in God, the Divine Mind, the Divine Wisdom, and the Divine Power. Mr. Calvin asserted, that it was sufficient to acknowledge these Divine Properties, and that it was not necessary so infisit on the term Persons. (*Instit. Cap. 6. Sect. 25. p. 179. Genev. 1550.*) St. Austin owns it to be very impudent. (*De Trin. L. 5. C. 9.*) St. Jerome declared, he cou'd not use it. (*Epist ad Paganos Damas.*) I am of the same Opinion. I have prepared a Second Letter, humbly to represent my Reasons for it. If I mistake in my Sentiment, I hope I am but of those Weak in the Faith, who may be received, and whom God will receive. I conclude, most humbly beseeching you to compassionate me, and to grant me your Prayers, being, &c.

*I*  
**The**

## The Second Letter.

THIS Controversy seems exceeding intricate and difficult, after the maturest, and carefullest Consideration of it. But then, seeing the Scripture exprest it self so obscurely, and in so general terms concerning that Subject, it seems that, as was intimated in the former Letter, it is to the intent to try our Moderation, as well as every ones Industry in particular, and that we should not be too Decisive and Imposing, and should not condemn, but should bear with one another hereinafter, and should unite and agree in the seeming Generality of the Expressions of Scripture, considering that sincere Persons may mistake about its obscurest Points, and considering that a hearty Love of God and of Christ cannot but be acceptable to them, that the main things are secured when the Expressions of Scripture are adhered to in this Matter, that it will in all probability suffice to have a fuller Knowledge of it after this Life, that in the mean time we are not to judge for one another, and where above all there is not probably so much Difference as has been imagined between the contending Parties. There would have been no Division of Christians had seriously made those reflections, and had contented themselves with this scriptural and general Profession, that the Word is God, that the Holy Spirit or Inspiration and Power of God is God, that these three, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit are one, and that there is this one God. There may undoubtedly, as I said, be more implied in these Expressions, or they may import otherwise, than some Men, or all Men, are aware of. Howbeit, the Scripture being thus general, seems to require indispensably no more than this general Acknowledgement. And therefore Protestants, particularly owning that they are not to judge for one another, can justly require no more for Terms of Union. And then all Christians, that are sincere, cannot but be safe; few, sincerely believing the Scripture, as Mr. Chillingworth somewhere observes, they believe implicitly even those very Truths and Senses which perhaps they are somewhat more in doubt of. For my part, God is Witness I consider this Subject to the best of my Power, and act and proceed sincerely herein, howsoever I may sometimes differ from former Sentiments, and be sometimes perplexed in my Thoughts. But after the fullest consideration, it seems to me, it is not impossible that the Arian or Socinian Systems be true, and yet not impossible but that that System also be true, which by the Word and Holy Spirit understands God himself, in the Acts and Properties of the Father, (tho' indeed it seems very impudent to say, God the Wisdom, and God the Power.)

Incontestably there is in God, as was said, a Divine Mind, a Divine Wisdom, and a Divine Will or Power. Nevertheless, even tho' by *the Word* in the beginning of St. John's Gospel should be understood the Divine Reason or Wisdom, produced forth or shewn in the Old and New Creation, (there said therefore, by a Figure, to be Incarnate, that is, most intimately to dwell with and assist the Human Spirit of that Man who is the chiefest of God's Messengers;) it hinders not, but that at the same time by *the Word* may be meant the Soul of the *Messiah*, which (for the reasons usually alledged for that part of the Arian Sentiment) it is credible was the first Creature, and which was God, in somuch as this Spirit not only was the First-born and Heir of all the Creation, and was designed the Chief of all Créatures, but also was so filled with the Divine Wisdom, and assisted with the Divine Power, that the Godhead was from the beginning as intimately united with this Holy Soul as possible, which it was not with any other, in which Sense, among others, (as upon the account of his being the Creature the most like to God, as also by reason of his singular partaking of the Divine Sovereignty and Authority,) this *Word*, or Word bearer, may be called God's only Son. And, as I take it, there can be meant no more by the Hypostatrick Union.

Now, seeing the *Arians* hold that Christ was *Instrumental in Creating or Ordering of the World*, and the *Socinians* say he is *Dens factus*, in somuch that, as both Parties own, he can act in all things as God, govern the World, raise the Dead, judge all Men, and do whatsoever the Father can do; they must necessarily be understood to suppose such a Communication as I have specified of the Divine Nature to the Spirit of Christ; whereby the Fullness of the Godhead so dwells in and conducts and assists him, and acts by him, that what God doth is reckoned to be done by Christ, being done by the Divine Virtue, both, dwelling in him, and disposed of by him according to his Desire. What Christ doth in the discharge of his Office may be imputed to God assisting him and dwelling in him; In like manner, what is most properly the Work of God may be ascribed to Christ, procuring it to be done, by his Application to the Godhead dwelling in him.

Considering then as exactly as I can what can be meant by the Hypostatical Union of the Divine with Christ's Human Nature, tho' the term, Hypostatrick Union, be not scriptural, nor strictly proper, it seems not impossible in a sufficient measure to come to a right understanding in that Matter; seeing all Parties acknowledge, and the Scripture teaches, the Fulness of the Godhead dwells in the Man Christ Jesus, so that he is assisted and conducted thereby, (as the Human Body is by the Human Soul,) and by that means Christ is in God and God in Christ, who sees Christ sees God, all that is God's is Christ's, and he can do all that God doth, and God is in him to receive our Homages thro his Mediation, and, when in that manner Christ is worshipped, God, who is thus intimately united to him, is worshipped, Christ incontestably being to be adored or reverenced, according to his most high Station and Dignity, to the Glory of the Father, being enabled to be a fit Object of

our Service, or of our Submission as well as Veneration, by the Divine Wisdom and Power inhabiting in him, and by the Supream Authority and Honour which it has pleas'd God to communicate to him, and invest him with, appointing him to represent God, and making him most intimately partaker of the Divine Nature, so that in adoring Christ there is no Idolatry, as in the Invocation of Saints, who have received from God neither that Dignity nor Power that Christ has, God having put his Name most eminently in him. Yet the Nature of the Thing, as well as the Practice of Scripture, shews it is necessary we then should direct our Prayers and Worship ultimately to God in Christ, when properly Religious Prayers and Divine Worship.

Thus Christ is the Man Jesus, anointed with the Spirit or Inspiration and Power of God, assisted and conducted by the Divine Wisdom, and intimately united to the God-head, and therefore in that sense he is truly said to be God, which, as far as I can understand, as I said, is all that can be meant by the Hypostatick Union, and, so, at the bottom, there need be no Difference about that Point, but all Parties in this manner may agree about it, tho' properly the Title, Son, or the Name, Jesus Christ, denotes the Man, in whom the Godhead dwells and with whom the Godhead is as much united as possible, (as is observed by *Grotius*, in his *Annotations*, on *Matth. 1, 16*, and *Col. 1, 16*.) tho' the Man properly be not the Godhead it self, no more than the Body is the Soul, and tho' this Man be properly God, or a God, in an inferiour sense, in as much as; as he represents God, so he is the Sovereign of the Universe under God; (*John 10, 35*;) so that properly the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is the only true God, (*1 Cor. 8, 6. John, 17, 3. Ephes. 4, 6*.) and it is He, who by his Divine Wisdom is said to dwell in our Saviour, (*John, 14, 10*.) which In-dwelling therefore of the Godhead in the Man Jesus Christ I take to be what may be meant by the term, the Hypostatick Union.

But after all the consideration I am capable of, I cannot find that the term, that there are three Persons in God, can be in any measure justifiable. For there is no reason, why the Divine Wisdom and Power should be looked upon as distinct Persons from the Father, (the Father, as we have seen, being said to dwell thereby in Christ,) any more than there is, that a Man's Reason and Will, or that his right Hand and left Hand, should be said to be distinct Persons from him.

A Person is something intelligent, subsisting of it self. But whatsoever is in God, whether Wisdom or Power, cannot subsist from or without the Divine Mind. All things in God avowedly are inseparable from one another, and therefore it must be owned no one of them distinctly can subsist of it self, it being absolutely necessary for all of them to subsist together, and in particular the Divine Power and Wisdom necessarily subsisting in the Divine Mind. They are, as in an Human Spirit, Properties and Acts of Powers of the Mind, and not Persons, (tho' Personal Acts may be ascribed to them, by a Figure common in all Languages, and particularly)

lately in the Stile of Scripture; *Prov. 20. 1. Prov. 30, 16. John, 3, 8. Prov. 9. 1. Ps. 119, 24.*

A Single Personal Pronoun is always used in Scripture, in speaking of God. And therefore God is to be held one Person, and not three Persons.

The Apostle St. Paul says, that what may be known of God, is discernible by the Light of Nature, (*Rom. 1, 19.*) But certainly the Light of Nature teaches not, that God is three Persons, but one, who is All-wise and Powerfull.

A Divine Person must comprise all Divine Perfections. For it must be All-Perfect; otherwise it were not God, so as to include, as it is said each Person doth, the whole Divine Nature and Essence: For God is All-Perfect. Now one such Person must be All-Sufficient. Consequently others cannot be Necessary. There cannot, therefore, be any other, or any more than one, Person in God. For all that is in God is Necessary.

Moreover, to suppose three All-Sufficient or All-Perfect Persons, implies three Gods; for every All-Perfect Person, subsisting of its self, must have in it self whatsoever is necessary to the constituting of a true, intire and distinct God: The asserting therefore three distinct Divine Persons, is to assert so many Gods. And, so, it is very important, for the Honour of Christianity and all the Concerns of Religion, to be freed from that Scholastick term, which sets up Polytheism, disguises the most excellent Revelation, destroys the Purity and Simplicity of the Gospel, and appears contradictory and impossible.

If the Son were a Divine Person as the Father, this Contradiction would follow, that the Divine Essence were both Begotten, and Unbegotten; for each Person is said to be the same Essence together with a peculiar Relation: A Relation alone is not said to be a Person, but a Relation with the Essence. Therefore the Essence with a peculiar Relation must be Unbegotten, and the same Essence with another Relation must be Begotten.

The Scripture says, (*Mark 13, 32,*) the Son knew not something that God knew, (the Fulness of the Godhead imparting its influences to him at one time more than at another, as the Soul doth to the Body, insomuch that Christ grew in Knowledge, and not communicating it's Nature to the Human Spirit in which it dwells, so as to make it cease to be a Creature or a Finite Being.) "Now, not only there are not two Sons in Christ, but it is not rational, nor the Stile of any Language, to deny simply, or in general terms, of a Being, what is true of any Part of him. Therefore, denying that the Son knew what God knew, it appears that by the Son the Scripture doth not understand the Divine Nature, but the Human; (tho' by a Figure, possibly, by the Son we may mean that Influence of the Divine Wisdom and Power, which is communicated to, and dwells in, the Son, the Man Christ.) This Argument is illustrated, in the 1st. Book of Crelle's Treatise, Touching one God, the Father, Sect. 2, Chap. 9.

It is said, that the Father only knew of that Day, (*Matth. 24, 36.*) Therefore the Father only is the God, who thus dwells by his Wisdom in the Soul

Soul of Jesus, so as to be intimately united therewith, as was said. This is confirm'd by Crell's observations (in the first Chapter of his aforesaid Book) on John, 17, 3. And in many other Places the Scripture is express<sup>t</sup>, that the Father is the only Person who is God, in the true or proper Sense of that word, 1 Cor. 8, 6. Ephes. 4, 6. &c.

Thus, and it seems thus only, the Divine Unity is preserved and establish'd. And if so, the Scholastick Terms should not be imposed. There is a small Octavo on that Subject, intituled, *Apologia pro Irenico Magno*, which I with were consider'd, and answer'd if answerable; the said Octavo and its Arguments being proposed as intended, to know the Reasons of others on this Subject.

By the Holy Spirit, it seems the Scripture understands the Divine Inspiration, or Miraculous Power, (as was intimated in the First Letter,) commonly joined with or annexed to and communicated by the Elect Angels, (1 Tim. 5, 21.) particularly the Seven Archangels, (Revel. 1, 4.) the First whereof undoubtedly is the Chief of the Angels, not personally united with the Divine Power, or God, (for he doth not represent God at the Head of the Universe,) but, as an inferior Officer, acting in concurrence with the Divine Power. This, as was shewn, seems to be deducible from several Texts of Scripture: And so the Holy Spirit is both the Divine Power, and the Angels whom God employs. God is pleased to work with them, and to have them work with him. Therefore God employing them in his Works, and particularly in the Service of the Church, they are subject to it's Head, the Governour of the World, for whom all the Parts of the Universe, and all Things whether in Heaven or Earth, were created to the Glory of God, being disposed of by our Lord Jesus Christ in the best Order, which is most agreeable to God.

God speaks by his Word, (or Word-bearer, the First-born, who is as it were the Mouth of God, or his Speaker,) and the Angels obey; and the Divine Power co-operates, and concurs with them. God in the beginning shewed the Son what was to be done. And the Son shewed it to the Chief of the Angels, when they were created and, with the concurrence of the Word, appointed to their several Stations. God did work before the Son. And the Son did work like him, being enabled by the Father, taught by the Divine Wisdom, and seconded by the Angels, when created, but assisted by infinite Power. But the Work is ascribed to the Sovereign and the First Actor under him, as the taking of a Town is ascribed to the General, and to the Prince by whose Authority he acts. This System seems to account for those Places of Scripture, which import, that Christ created or disposed all things together with God, that the Son can do nothing of himself, but that what he sees the Father do, he doth the like, (the Son seeing, thereby, what he is to desire of the Divine Power, as Grotius notes, on John 5, 19, 20, 21.) and that Christ is the Word of God, and that he is a God, that the Angels are Ministring Spirits, &c.

Till his Incarnation, *the Word*, or aforesaid Word-bearer, was as a Son in his Minority, in his Father's House. Then a Son little differs from the Servants, tho' he is the Heir; he is then under probation for the Inheritance. In his Pilgrimage on Earth, he was in a State of greater Humiliation. At his Ascension and Exaltation, he was then properly and most eminently associated to the Empire of the Universe. This is properly God the Son, or the Man Christ Jesus exalted, and in his Human Nature made the King of Kings under God; in which sense, in the Scripture-stile, he may be said to have created, or disposed and modelled, all things in Heaven and Earth, as *Grotius* shews, in his Annotations, on Col. i. 16, and he may, as such a Man, much more be said to be God, than the Bread of the Eucharist is said to be his Body.

These things not only appear in a great measure conceivable and intelligible, rational and free from intolerable difficulties, and in short accountable and maintainable; but they seem perfectly agreeable to the Holy Scripture. The Primitive Antiquity, as I said, seems very much divided and uncertain about this most obscure Subject, concerning which it was not impossible to mistake, considering the great Generality and the mysterious and obscure Manner in which it pleasd the Holy Inspiration of God to dictate it to the Sacred Writers, and considering the Philosophy that then prevailed. (Howbeit, even by the Notions of *Irenaeus*, *Justin Martyr*, *Origen*, and all the Doctors that began so early in some measure to platonize, it seems that they were then properly *Semi-Arians*, and therefore rather *Unitarians* than otherwise: And, so, the Error of either side could not then be great.) But there is no Antiquity and Authority like that of the Scripture. And it seems, that this kind of *Arian* or *Semi-Arian* System, which I have described in these two Letters, is the most agreeable to it.

If I err in my Sentiment, I said, I hope I am but of those Weak in the Faith, who may be received, and whom God will receive; for I am heartily desirous to know his Will, and the Truth, to follow it, and have fervently prayed him to shew it me, so far at least as it is necessary to be known. And this Unitarian System little differs from the Trinitarian.

It seems indeed strange, to address distinct Prayers to the Divine Power. The Scripture doth it not. It seems in a manner as harsh, as to represent it as a distinct Deity; and it seems to do it, in making of it a Divine Person. And tho' the Man Christ Jesus may be invocated, (by Wishes, when absent, we find he is invocated in Scripture,) as Mediator between God and Man and as united to the Godhead; yet as a distinct supremely Divine Person, is, I think, no where expressly taught in Scripture, nor necessarily deducible from any Argument. It seems Christ now is sufficiently invocated here by us, when, both, we are denominated by him, and he is so call'd and relied upon in our Prayers, that our Petitions are put up to God in his Name, and that we therein offer up his Sacrifice to God, and plead his Merits and Intercession. This is actually to call upon his Name in Prayer,

as is observed in the Brief History of the Unitarians, on A. S. 9, 14, and 21.

As St. Jerome rejected and protested against the term, *Persons*, and St. Austin owned it to be improper, and Mr. Calvin opined it sufficed to say, *Properties*; Dr. Sherlock (Page 7th of his Book, which is intituled, *The present State of the Socinian Controversy*) observes, that the Truth doth not depend upon the use of this, and other the like Scholastick terms; for, he owns, *the true Faith was before them*. Why should they then be imposed?

By the second and third *Persons*, may those partial Considerations of the Divine Mind be understood, the Divine Wisdom, and Power or Inspiration? There would then be no Difference in the Doctrine; for all do acknowledge these things to be in God. But for the Term, it cannot be warrantable, to impose the calling Wisdom and Power, Persons, for the reasons aforesaid. And, on the other hand, when God is worshipped, can we then be wanting in our Worship of what is supremely adorable? That cannot be imagined.

In summ. The term, *Persons*, is not in Scripture, in speaking of the *Divine Nature*. The Texts alledged for it, or for the sense and import of that term, are very rationally susceptible of another signification. Nevertheless, the Divine Mind, Wisdom, and Power, are owned to be in God, and to be God, or eternal, infinite, all-perfect; ('Tis granted, all that is in God is reducible to these three, Divine Intellect or Mind, Wisdom, and Power; the Divine Will being implied in the Divine Power, or the Power in the Will, and the Divine Wisdom comprehending the Divine Goodness and Justice) But then the Divine Mind is most properly the Divine Essence, and the Divine Wisdom and Power are incontestably Divine Properties. ('Tis from Plato's School, that Christians learned to make *Persons* of them.) And it seems manifestly, that the Doctrine of *three Persons in one God* is encumbered with unavoidable Contradictions. What must I do? I cannot think otherwise of that term, nor of the *Nicene* and *Athanasian* Creeds, which use it, or imply it.

I most humbly beseech You, for God's sake, to compassionate me, if I seem to mistake in my thoughts concerning the scholastick terms. May these things be so considered and illustrated, that the Truth may be made to appear most conspicuous, to all that are sincere! I humbly beg your Prayers, and am, &c.

## P. S.

If by the *Word*, and the *Spirit* should seem to be understood *some things*, in the *Divine Nature*, somewhat analogous to *Persons*; yet, first of all, it seems, at least, they must be not only inferior to the Father,

but as it were some Portion (as *Grotius* notes, on *John 1, 2,*) or but some *Beams*, of his *Person*, (in some measure, as are to a Man his right Hand and left Hand,) insomuch that the Father communicates of his Perfections to them but so far as he pleases. For the Scripture, as we have seen, (*John 17, 3. 1 Cor. 8, 6, &c.*) represents the Father not only as the Superior, but as the whole Godhead; all that Christ and the Holy Spirit do, is ascribed to the Father, as the Chief and Primary Cause, working in and by them; Christ says, that the Father who dwells in him doth the Works, that the Son can do nothing of himself, that the Son knew not when was to be the Day of Judgement, that the Spirit not only is sent but is taught and commissionated what to do and say; and if the Practice of Scripture and the Texts to that purpose be exactly weighed, it seems that Christians are not directed to address their Prayers to the Son or the Spirit, but to the Father, or God in general terms. (For when in a Vision Christ is both seen and heard speak since his Exaltation, that is a particular case; there being no doubt, but that not only he is then to be personally honoured, but may then certainly be applied to, tho' not as a distinct and second Divine Person, yet as the Mediator between God and Men, and as the Viceroy of the Universe, assisted by the Godhead, dwelling in him, as was said.) It should then be observed, Reason and Scripture plainly shew us, that the Divine Mind is endued with infinite Wisdom and Power, as being the natural and necessary Perfections and Properties of the Divine Mind it self. But, that the Divine Wisdom and Power are real and distinct Persons, that particular Prayers should be address'd distinctly to the Divine Mind, distinctly to the Divine Wisdom, and distinctly to the Divine Power, and that the Deity consists of several real Things, or real Portions, whereof the one has excellencies above the other, seems unaccountable to the most sedate Reason, and appears not expressly specified in the Word of God. Now it seems that from this consideration, (all along enforced or made way for in these Two Letters,) these two Inferences do necessarily follow.

*First*, We should, then, ordinarily, and in common Assemblies, content our selves to direct our Prayers to the Father, or God in general terms, as the greatest number of the reformed Churches do: (these, incontestably, would be the safest Measures, in so intricate a Matter; it being certain that when God is worshipped, all is adored that is supremely adorable:) and we should content our selves with the Apostles Creed, the Expressions whereof are as general as those of Scripture, whereas Human Terms, more decisive, may be erroneous, and may cause just scruples in so abstruse a subject.

*Secondly*, there is, then, truly no such great Difference between the Trinitarians and the Unitarians, but that the Terms of Church-Communion may and should thus be made so general as to comprehend them. For the Unitarians will unanimously acknowledge, that there is in God

a Divine Mind endued with Wisdom and Power; that the Wisdom, whereby the World was contrived and redeemed, is communicated to our Saviour, from the beginning, as intimately as it is possible to be communicated, tho' he receives larger influences of it especially since his Ascension and Exaltation; (Dr. Sherlock, in his last Book, intituled, *The Proofs of our Saviour's Divinity explain'd, &c.* P. 211, owns this to be the whole meaning of what is call'd the *Hypostatrick Union or Incarnation* of the Divinity with Christ's Human Nature;) that by this Divine Wisdom God dwells in Christ, and is most intimately united with him; that Christ is to be honoured, as thus dignified; that the Godhead, which dwells in Christ, is to be ador'd with supream Worship; and that God has given to Christ the Disposition of the Divine Power and Inspiration, at his Desire, without measure, or in the largest measure possible and necessary. (*Grotius, on John*, 3, 34.) Now, as was said, it seems, this Divine Mind, Wisdom, and Power, is all that the *Trinitarians* can mean by their term, three Persons. (The Scripture, as was observed, has not that term, *three Persons in God*: And it is certainly sufficient to keep to the Scripture terms, especially for a Means of Church-Union.) On the other hand, the *Trinitarians* generally own, that one Divine Person, and especially the Father, comprehends the Godhead; (as the Divine Mind cannot but be considered as being joined with and inseparable from the whole Divine Nature, as a Man's Head acting is the Man himself acting;) that therefore when God, or the Father, is worshipped, the whole Godhead actually is thereby necessarily worshipped; that the Man Christ is not so God, as if the Manhood were changed into God, or ceased to be a Creature; that the Man Christ, being still a Creature, the one as much dignified as possible, is to be honoured, in the manner that the *Unitarians* hold, as a Creature, as highly dignified as possible; and that Christ being to be honoured to the Glory of the Father, all the Honour to be paid him is to tend ultimately to God, even as the *Unitarians* assert.

It seems that if these Considerations were sufficiently weighed, even the Agreement between the *Trinitarians* and *Unitarians* would appear to be so great, as to justify the Terms of Church-Communion pleaded for here, as in the *Apologia pro Irenico Magno*. But (I appeal to God to testify it) I desire above all things to be certainly informed, and directed in the Truth; and therefore if the Arguments and Reasonings either here or in that Book are in any measure defective and erroneous, I do most heartily wish that it may be shewn in the Spirit of Christianity. And if it may be shewn, the Subject doth well deserve that pains, and it is to be hoped some Men may be found to be employed in that Work. But if the Notion of the Generality of Scripture, in this most intricate and abstruse Subject, be the true Standard of Union; then, as was said, Publick Prayers shou'd be directed to the Father, or God in general terms, and we should have no other Creed but that of the Apostles. The *Unitarian*, even the *Socinian*, System seems sufficiently Orthodox, and most Safe, as I have represented it; and there seems to be

nothing decisively exprest in Scripture against it, but many things seem very much to conduce to confirm *Unitarianism*. Moderation therefore seems here to be absolutely necessary. And that's all, that is desired. For then Christians would nor judge one another any more, nor set stumbling-blocks in one another's way. And it seems, this Moderation cannot here be reasonably denied. For (I cannot but repeat it) the least that can be said is, first, on the one hand, *that* this is a most difficult Matter, and the human Decisions and uncertain and most probably unscriptural Determinations in Publick Injunctions may be most unjust, dangerous and pernicious; and, secondly, on the other, *that the Unitarians honour the Man Jesus Christ; and worship the Godhead dwelling in the Man Jesus Christ, even as much as the Trinitarians can desire, and no otherwise.* But, by the Human Terms and Magisterial Determinations, (which, both, assert three Divine Persons, and make the Equality of the Son and Spirit with the Father to be an indispensible Necessary Point of Faith,) sincere and pious Souls, for whom Christ died, may be driven out of the Communion of the Church, or destroy'd by Doubts and Fears and Scruples. The Protestant Principles, which imply that there is no living Magisterial Judge of Controversies and that all are to prove all things and judge for themselves, seem to require a greater Moderation and Generality in Terms of Church Communion, with respect to so very abstruse and intricate Matters.

I find that a mighty stress is laid, on this consideration, that in the second and third Centuries, and almost ever since, the greatest Number of Christians seem to have been of a like Sentiment with the present *Trinitarians*. But it seems this Argument should not be thought absolutely infallible, for these reasons, which the *Unitarians* alledge, and which seem very considerable.

I. Men, being apt to take wrong Measures, and often too presumptuous, might soon deviate from the truth; as appear'd by experience, when the Generation next after *Joshua* departed from the Law of *Moses*, *Judg.* 2, 10, 11. All at once, ten of the twelve Tribes of *Israel* irrecoverably revolted from the Institution of God, *1 Kings*, 12, 28. And at the same time, as at other divers times, all or the greatest part of their Brethren did evil likewise in the sight of the Lord, *1 Kings*, 14, 22. So fickle then and weak are Men, that no strels is to be laid on their Practice; but our recourse must be to the Law which is the Testimony, (*Isa.* 8, 20.) Therefore the Unitarian Arguments, and especially those taken from Scripture, are still at this day to carry it, if they be solid; for there is no Prescription against the Truth.

II. A thousand years in the sight of God are as one Day, *2 Petr.* 3, 8. And all Nations before him are as nothing, *Isa.* 40, 17. Yet a remnant shall be sav'd, *Rom.* 9, 27. The little Flock need not fear, *Luk.* 12, 32. Tho reduced as low, as in *Elias* his Days, *1 Kings*, 19, 10. The Gates of Hell, the Strength of Death and the Grave, or the Destruction of the Faithful, shall not finally so prevail, as wholly and for ever to extirpate the Necessary Truth off of the face of the Earth, *Matth.* 16, 18. Therefore a time may

may yet com, when the Earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the Sea, *Jl. 11, 9.*

III. It appears, that from the beginning there were great Numbers of *Unitarians*, that there have been *Unitarians* all along, and that many of them were the most learned of their time. Who, for instance, more learned than *Theodotian*, *Symmachus*, *Paulus Samosatenus*, *Lucianus*, and *Origen*, *Arius*, and *Eusebius*, for these last as *Arians* or *Semi-Arians* may as well as the former be reck'ned *Unitarians*? Even from the 18th Chapter of the 5th Book of *Eusebius* his *Ecclesiastical History* it appears, that at least a great Number of the Primitive Bishops and Churches were *Unitarians*. *Justin Martyr* owns *Unitarians* for his Christian Brethren, *Colloq. cum Tryphon. Jud. P. 207.* But, by a Quotation in the aforesaid Chapter of *Eusebius*, it appears the *Unitarians* pretended they were all along in the first Century the greatest Number, and had the Succession of Bishops in their Sentiment in the most considerable Places even till Popes *Victor* and *Zepherin*, at the end of the second Century; which doth not seem to be there disproved, as it might then have been if it had not been true. *Origen* owns, the Jewish Christians were generally *Unitarians*, *Contr. Cels. L. 2. P. 56.* It appears, that *Theodore* doth the same, *Heres. Fab. L. 2. C. 3.* For the Jewish Christians especially were call'd *Nazarens* as well as *Ebionites*, as appears, *Act. 24, 5. Epiph. Heres. Naz. C. 15. Augustin. de Heres. C. 9, 10. St. Jerom. Epist. ad August.* Thus it is own'd, the *Ebionites* and *Nazarens* were no contemptible *Unitarians*; and they were thus nick-nam'd first by the unbelieving Jews, and in like manner probably by the Heathens, and afterwards by the platonizing Christians. A few years after the Council of *Nice*, the greatest part of Christians were *Unitarians*. In fine, there have always been some *Unitarian* Christians in *Asia*; and there are many Churches of them to this day, in the Dominions of the Pagan and Mahometan Princes, and even in *Muscovy*, as well as in *Transilvania*, in *Hungary*, *Sclavonia*, and *Illyricum*.

IV. It is certain, that all the Doctors, that in the greatest part of the second Century were profelyted from Heathenism, and that became the great ring-leaders, were wholly devoted to, not to say infatuated with, *Plato's Philosophy*. Even the Popish Criticks complain of it, *Huet. Origenian. L. 2. C. 2.* And even some of them do insinuate (what indeed cannot be doubted of) that upon that account the Writings of the Primitive *Unitarians* were destroy'd by the *Trinitarians*, *Vales.* in *Euseb. L. 5. C. 11.* Now all the unscriptural Terms, which are us'd concerning the Trinity and which have caus'd all the Division, being found in the *Platonick Philosophers*, and so many of the Primitive Christians being avowedly *Platonists*, it cannot be question'd or wonder'd from whence those Terms were brought in, or which way came the alteration of Doctrine.

V. It cannot be denied, but that about and since the Council of *Nice*, the greatest Violences have been constantly used, to suppress the *Unitarians*. It is not strange therefore, if they have been driven out of many Places,  
where

where the Governours persisted to persecute them. Thus Protestants have been extirpated out of Spain, Bohemia, and in a great measure out of France.

VI. It seems incontestable, that the Primitive Trinitarians, or those commonly held such, differed from those of the Council of Nice and their Followers, and that these as well as the former differ from the present Scholasticks. For the prelent Scholasticks assert, that there is but one Divine Spirit, and that the Son and Holy Ghost are eternal and necessary Persons, equal to the Father. The Nicene in their Creed say, that the Son is God of God, which implies distinct God of distinct God, or a distinct God, which title they give not to the Spirit. *Gregory Nazianzen* says, that many good Catholicks in his time would have been scandalized, if in the religious Assemblies the Holy Spirit had openly been said to be God, *Orat. 20. The Great St. Basil* says, that God is not one in Number, but only in Nature; (horrid Polytheism, perfect Heathenism, and too palpable a Demonstration of the Mischief of Platonism, and of the then prodigious Alteration of the true Doctrine!) and with the current of the Doctors of those times he represents the three Persons as being as distinct Beings as three Men, *141 Epist. ad Casariens. Irenaeus* teaches, that the Father is greater than the Son, *Advers. Heres. L. 2. C. 49*, and that besides the Father and the Son no other is of his own Person Lord or God, *L. 3. C. 9. Justin Martyr*, who owns that he and at least many Christians in the second Century ador'd and worshipped the Prophetick Spirit and the Host of the other good Angels together with God and his Son, (*Apol. 2. P. 43.*) affirms, that the Son had not a necessary Being, but was voluntarily begotten of the Father, that he is inferior to him, ministering to the Will of the Father, (*Ibid. P. 221.*) that the unbegotten God, or the Father, doth not descend or ascend from any place, neither is moved, seeing he cannot be contain'd in any place, but that this might be said from the beginning of the World of the Son, who, sais he, by the Father's Will is a God, and in the beginning before the Creation of the World was generated of the Father, *Ibid. P. 221, and 280.* Accordingly, *Tertullian* holds, that there was a time when the Son was not, *Advers. Hermogen. C. 3.* The Council which magisterially condemned the Doctrine professed by *Paulus Samosatenus* and his Party, at *Antioch*, at the same time decreed that the Son is not of the same Essence with the Father, as is even noted by *Dalauus*, in his Treatise *Denuo Patrum*, *Lib. 1. Cap. 5.* Thus by these very instances it appears, that the Trinitarians have so much varied, that a constant Tradition cannot be pleaded.

For these several reasons it seems, that too great a stress should not be laid on the pretended (Ecclesiastical) Antiquity of this Sentiment, but, on the contrary, that the chiefest Inquiry should be, What appears most decisive in Scripture and Reason concerning the Points themselves that are controverted, and concerning which it seems that the least that can be granted is that with relation to them we should keep in Terms of Union to the Generality of the Terms of Scripture? If that should prove a Mistake, yet it is very fit that so important a Matter should be most carefully consider'd and debated, that the Error

Errour may be evinc'd and confuted, by those that may have the opportunity to do it. But if this be no Errour, the not considering of it cannot but be most pernicious ; wherefore I cannot but wish this were communicated to several learned Men, in order to their giving their Opinion and Reasons concerning these things. It seems that (for any thing that appears to the contrary) by the Father, the Word, and the Spirit (in understanding them of God,) we may understand what the *Unitarians* (then) understand thereby, Namely, God, and the Divine Wisdom, and the Divine Power or Divine Inspiration ; and that our Prayers are to be addressed to the Father, or God in general terms. Most learned Men among *Protestants*, have been of that opinion. I have mentioned *Calvin's* observation, that the acknowledgement of the Divine Properties is sufficient, without insisting on the term, *Persons*. *Luther* says, it were better to call Almighty God, God, than Trinity. *Pestil. Major Dominic. Forbesius* asserts, that the Persons, as Persons, are not the Object of Worship ; that the adoring of them distinctly, is extremely pernicious ; that then divers Objects of Worship are represented ; and that this Practice is founded on no Precept or Example of Holy Scripture, &c. *Instruction. Historico-Theologic. Part. I. Qu. 31, a. 1.* *Casaubon* opines, that in such accumulate repeated Invocations, the Church imitated the Heathens, who, not knowing which of the Gods or Goddesses they had best apply themselves to, therefore called upon them all, *Exercit. P. 327.* But we know, that the Spirit doth nothing but what he is commissionated, (*John, 16, 13.*) that the Father dwells in the Son, (*John, 14, 10.*) and that the Son doth nothing but what the Father shews him, (*John, 5, 30.*) Therefore incontestably it is sufficient, to address to the Father. And we should content ourselves to do so, for this reason, that it is sufficient and safe, on the one hand, and, on the other, that the Unitarian Arguments appear very considerable, or, rather, unanswerable.

The *Unitarians* shew ; That all that Christ doth, he doth it by the Assistance of the Father ; (*John, 14, 10.*) That, tho there is but one God properly, or in the most eminent sense, yet that title, in *Scripture*, is sometimes communicated to some *Creatures*, and is of the same import with that of *Sovereign* ; (*John, 10, 34, &c.*) That Christ is not only the Word, or Great Messenger of God, but most eminently represents God, and is made, *under God*, the *Sovereign* of Men and Angels, and that God continually assists him in the discharge of his Office and continually doth for him at his request all that is necessary to that end ; (*Hebr. 2, 8 : John, 11, 42.*) That (it being usual among the Jews) it is the stile of the New Testament, to apply by way of accommodation some Sayings and Texts of the Old Testament, to some Events and Cases or Circumstances to which they may be applicable, in a sense not exactly the same with that implied in the Ancient Prophets ; (*Matth. 2, 15. Matth. 2, 18. Matth. 2, 23. Gal. 3, 11. Rom. 10, 13.*) That the New Creation, or New Modelling of all Things by the Gospel, is by a Figure in the New Testament constantly compared to the first Creation ; (*John, 1, 1. &c. Mark, 1, 1. Hebr.*

*Hebr. 1, 10. Hebr. 2, 5;*) That, the Godhead most intimately dwelling and most extraordinarily operating in the Messiah, (so that the Man Jesus Christ is the most glorious Schechina, figured by the Cloud in the Wildernes and by the Ark of the Jewish Covenant wherein God shewed himself present and before which the People of God worshipped and prostrated themselves,) and Christ most eminently representing God, being exalted to the Sovereignty of the Universe, and being assifed with the Divine Wisdom and Power, the New Testament, by way of accommodation, ascribes to the Messiah, invested with that Power and Dignity, the most glorious Actions attributed to God in the Old Testament, and the Divine Attributes and Properties which may be suppos'd to be in some sense or in some manner communicated to him by the Divine Indwelling; (*John, 1, 1, &c., Hebr. 1, 10. Matth. 18, 20. Matth. 28, 20. Revel. 1, 11. Revel. 2, 23.*) That after all, in fine, the Scripture expressly shews, that the Father is the only true God, or that the Father alone is God in the proper and eminent sense of that word; (*John, 17, 3. 1 Cor. 8, 6. Ephes. 4, 6. Matth. 24, 36. Mark, 13, 32. &c.*) About two hundred Texts, distinguish God from Christ.

Now, as Dr. Sherlock himself observes, in his Anwer to the Bishop of Gloucester, or *The Scripture-Proofs of our Saviour's Divinity explain'd, &c.* P. 55, If but one Text of Scripture proves, that no other Person but the Father alone is God, (as the five last quoted are in particular taken by the Unitarians most expressly to do,) that must put an end to this Controversy, and excuse or justify all the Interpretations of Scripture given by the Unitarians, how harsh soever they may otherwise now appear. (The Dr. has that observation in several other places of that Book; Pages, 47, 50, 58.) It seems the Unitarian Interpretations do not appear so harsh and unnatural, if the stile of Scripture be carefully attended unto, as may be seen in *the Brief History of the Unitarians, or in Grotius his Annotations.*

For these reasons, I conclude for the Generality of the Terms of Scripture; Scripture and Reason being the Light of God, (*Ps. 119, 105, Prov. 20, 27,*) to which every one is to attend, (*Rom. 10, 8, 1 Cor. 10, 15,*) no one being to judge for others in intricate Matters, but all being to unite in that which is Clear and Express, or in the Latitude and Expressions of the Rule it self, (*2 Cor. 1, 24, Rom. 14, 13, and 19, Phil. 3, 16, &c.*) And if these reasons are invalid to the concluding of the Fitnes of such a Method of Church-Communion, as I have mentioned, I earnestly wish that their invalidity may be shewn, in the Spirit of the Gospel. But if that Method be fit and necessary, then may it be followed, that God may be propitious to us, and that we may serve him as we ought to do, in Righteoulness, Charity, and true Piety! Amen!

F I N I S.

### E R R A T A:

Page 2. Line 13. for Desiring or Willing read Willing or Desiring. p. 2. l. 18, f. the r. this. p. 6. l. 1. after Scripture, add, which, like that of all the Eastern Tongues, is extraordinarily figurative. p. 8. l. 29. f. If r. If. p. 8:l. 33. after Trinitarian, add, as the Modalists, who are the greatest Number, do now represent it:

